## Hats off to a fighter

Dear Jillian, you are an inspiration for all of us (The Slumdog Millionaire, July 20). The way you overcame all obstacles with sheer dignity is a lesson to be learnt by one and all. What really moved me is your compassion. In spite of enduring inexplicable hardships, you are not bitter about life. May you achieve all you want and more. My best wishes are with you.

Sayendri Panchadhyayi St. Xavier's College

I had tears in my eyes when I read the article. For some time, I thought I was reading a Bollywood script. I was touched by the way you struggled in early life and how even after becoming successful you never forgot your hard days in Calcutta and dedicated a large part of your time to the poor.

Biman Mitra

 Jillian Haslam, I read your heartwrenching biography. It is an inspiration for all to fight against poverty.

Dr N.K. Das

Dear Jillian, you are an inspiration. My admiration for you doubled because of your attachment to Calcutta. This is a city where I have lived for many years and I love. More power to your hopes and aspirations.

Syloo Matthai

 I was delighted to read about your life and achievements.

B. Mitra

- What a life you have had! I was amazed at your courage. Bela Majumder
- Yours is a touching and inspiring story. With grit, guts and determination, you rose from abject poverty and triumphed in life. You are a role model to trump all role models. I salute you and wish you every success.

Brian Cecil

Mother Teresa came at 17 to Calcutta to help the helpless die in peace. You left Calcutta at 17 and went on to help the helpless live better. I have lived in the city for 67 years, voicing

spirit than money. Poverty is dehumanising. But in a select, blessed few, it nurtures superhuman spirit. I belong to an army of "concerned citizens", armchair champions of the poor. Your story might propel some of us off that chair.

> Somnath Banerjee, AJC Bose Road

Where there is a will, there is a way. Education is the key to success, besides courage.

J Samuel

Jillian, your journey is indeed very touching. Your life and your work will definitely inspire millions to beat the odds and live their dreams and maybe make a few of the privileged spare a moment's thought for those who are not.

Kuldip Sarkar, Jalpaiguri Government Engineering College

 Dear Jillian, I congratulate you for your decision to return to Calcutta. I personally feel there is no shortcut to success. My widowed mother has worked as a domestic help. My brother started his life as a steward in a hotel and is now an assistant manager, I started off as clerk in a school with a paltry salary of Rs 60 in 1970, went on to become a teacher and for the last 12 years I have been headmaster of a school but I have not forgotten the days when my brother and I would go to school after having just a glass of water and a biscuit. I have tried to help provide midday meals to all stu-

Asit Ghosh, Headmaster, Bratachari Vidyasram, Joka

The story of Jillian Haslam reads like a fairytale. Her resilience and determination in fighting tremendous odds in life remains an example to others. But her noblest achievement lies in her great contribution to Calcutta even after she reached the pinnacle of success and in a far-off land where life is significantly wealthier. She has not forgotten her roots.

**Prabir Kumar** Majumder, SN Roy Road

Hats off to Jillian! I could not control my tears reading about her.

Dr Haradhan Sarkar

An amazing story of an incredible woman who never gave up, knowing she had to

## THE SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

...AND THE HOPE

illian Haslam, a 42-yearold British woman, was born in Calcutta of par-ents who did not leave the city after British rule ended in 1947 and brought apon themselves very tark times.

As the fifth of 12 siblings, ses, behind peo-

rs, got selected by Bank of erica where she soared h she migrated to Lon-She took her siblings

na book on her life which ritish screenplay writer Neil Neil has picked up for a film ript. She secretly wishes that ulta Stiles plays her if the film

teless living on the Found a home in the

AND HOPE

strength and the way you

fought despite all the adversi-

ties. Hers is indeed a glorious

example. She is an ultimate

It felt wonderful reading

about Jillian's victory in the

battle with life. She has lost a

lot, including some near and

dear ones, but won the war.

I was overwhelmed after

reading the story of Jillian

Haslam, the real slumdog mil-

lionaire. My gratitude to this

Simply spellbinding, at once

rending. She is a sterling exam-

ple of mental resilience in the

face of much adversity. She has

proved beyond doubt that ex-

treme poverty and utter depri-

vation cannot keep a spirited

My salute to Jillian Haslam.

Dipak Banerjee, Asutosh

Mukherjee Rd

Dr Ujjal Banerjee

heart-warming and heart-

lion-hearted woman for her

silent charity.

person down.

warrior.

ort attack, Mum remained in the Salvation Army recovering, we fell upon

is houses where she found one before ending up in shums of Kidderpore and any off-charity till she left city at 17. at 17. in verardahs. Sometimes lived in Delhi for a few when it would rain, we'd go When I was around five Ale

Nazireth, a south Indian gen-tieman, approached my father to teach in a small school in Today she is a motivational to feach in a small selb pooler, trainer and auther and training to feach in a small selb pooler, trainer and auther and training to feach in a small selb pooler, trainer and auther and training to feach training training to feach training train Dum Dum. So we packed ur poverty at six months, We did

> never speaking about it again Every fair In the dead of se, on a local train, in the chothes we short in.
>
> We came back to Calcutta.
>
> Mum took Dod back to the Sal
>
> "I'm going to fight"

Saptak Ghosh

Sam Das

Alok Ganguly

you Jillian!

cried in relief. I have never

seen, heard or imagined such

Unbelievable. Larger than

A million congratulations

on your meteoric rise. Yours is

a success story and it is entire-

I appreciate the way you

have taken care of your par-

ents and sisters. One can hard-

ly imagine what you had gone

knows you through your deeds.

Jillian's is an awe-inspiring

who fought all odds and rose to

the pinnacle of success. Jillian

remain undeterred even in the

Jillian's story is all the more

relevant in a country like ours

adies are widely prevalent and

where socio-economic mal-

deprive many a children of

is a living example of how to

toughest times.

story. She is a wonderful lady

through and today the world

that made it possible.

ly your tenacity and endurance

Shyamal Kumar Bag

Prabhash Basu

Kanta Mitra

Sampad Dutt

Shahid

poverty and misery. I salute



positive way. want any boy or girl to know that irrespective of what circumstances how poverty-stricken you are, you can change yourself like I did

I had no idea then

that another world even

existed. I wasn't aware

that there was anything

slum. What I did know

was that I had to get

away. And that I think is

and yourself in.... I've

moved on in a very

the key to anyo

were super excited because it fold like our first home. Worms used to connecut of the ground at night and big bondicoots. At first there was no electricity, there was no electricity of the was no water nearby. I can Susan needed milk, so I can state that the was no water nearby. I can Susan needed milk, so I can state that the was no water nearby. I can Susan needed milk, so I can state to the little cas shop every day and managed to get some milk, look after Neil and to student my sister and we'd do it not realising they were being horrible to us. When source hungry swadorf thank of anything else.

I had no idea at that point in time that another worldor another country even existed. I wasn't aware that there was nother country even existed. I wasn't aware that there was nother country even existed. I wasn't aware that there was nother country even existed. I wasn't aware that there was nother country even existed. I wasn't aware that there was a child I enjoyed it. Yet, I'd win the bombs at us to see us jump infright solving to the of poverty. Dharmeentra and you se Hema Maliniand dance for us, we'll give you bhottos' and we'd do it not realising they were being horrible to took my shlings vanessa. When you're hungry you don't think of anything eise.

The does bloom for your form of the work for Calculta and Dehi and want to do it on a large roade now because.

I had met rus husband in have the means to fit could

ed to accepting that.
I finished my free school-

ing in St. Thomes', I was 17 years old and I moved to Delhi to my elder sister Christine who hadn't faced what we had food John

very soon I became the I can't help that, dent and head of the world to see that i I loved the job. I was always
posionate about charity and
belging people. I won several
awards for the benk, Our CBO
where you came from, I have

I had met my husbond in have the means to

neumstances that you find us reliable in. The minute you as Ive moved on in a very possible that decision that if reset to accept what's happeng to mer, the minut starts to cannot all the ideas and ways or you to get yourself out of estimation. The minute you are accepting your fate and five, you will always be record to accepting that.

tional public speaker. By the way Susan, who b

once almost died, topped he university in London. She die so well that they put up her university i away in my house, she was only about 50. Till then I had very proud.

ner and little ones.

oot after 1 was inter- Even now as I live there, I live of for Bank of America — more here, I know I live i viewed for Bank of America with hundreds of girls and got selected, a part of me became unslopable. Hydjoined asex, outsite secretors to the Color work with but my beerf is been

Samarendra Dash

Your story is inspirational and proves that nothing is over till it's over, so never give up.

basic amenities.

Deirdre Green

 The article on Jillian was an inspiring one.

Bama Dasgupta

No words are enough to express the greatness of Jillian. Ashoke Roy Chowdhury

Great achievement. I appreciate what Jillian has done for the underprivileged children of our city. Her efforts are commendable.

Fabian Gomes

I salute you for your confidence and fighting spirit. Nabanita Ghosh

 The way to success lies inside us and you proved it very well.

Md Rashid Jamil

 Jillian Haslam is an institution. Her life is full of lessons. She is an icon.

Prasanta K Karmakar

I was very touched by Jillian's honesty, strength, posi-

tive outlook and above all her belief in finding goodness. She

is blessed. Her guardian angel has always looked after her because she listened. May she find more hope and happiness in life and inspire more Jil-

lians to find a meaningful life.

S.K. Deb

Jillian has made India proud, a worthy example.

Kalyan Sharma, SN Roy Road

 Respect to Jillian for her grit and courage. The city has given her both pain and pleasure. But she hasn't forgotten her roots.

Kalyan Guha

I am so very moved by your story. I will pray for your work. Linda D'Cruz, Morley, Western Australia

 My salute to Jillian. Sujata Banerjee

I thank you also for loving Calcutta so much and for your charitable work. You are a real braveheart.

> Amit Dasgupta, Picnic Garden Road

I wish to congratulate Jillian for her bravery. She made me

My wife and I were astonished by your patience, dedication, strong will power, perseverance, honesty and willingness to attain a standard in life. S.S. Paul

feel so elated and proud.

commendable.

city gave her.

Congratulations Jillian on

all that you have achieved. It is

I am speechless at the kind of

magic that a positive person is

able to bring into her life

through determination and

self-belief. It reaffirmed the

cliche "anything is possible".

In an environment of serious

gloom, it is heartening to see a

survivor thrive and vet cherish

Calcutta for the foundation the

Jillian, your story read like a

novel. I know of a few people

who went through hell while

living in Calcutta, but your life

was in the deepest hole of hell.

Hats off to you for having faced

your reality. And what kept you

alive is refusing to accept the

circumstances that you found

vourself in. Your life reminds

me once again that when we

look up we begin to complain

that we have so less, but once

we learn to look below, we find

there are so may unfortunate

people who are suffering more

than us. And that humbles us.

Mohammad Sahabuddiin

Fatima Ghosh

Srimati Roy

Your life story is very inter-

Henry Holley

Bob D'Costa

Heartbreaking.... God bless your golden heart.

esting.

Jeanetta Osbourne

 A grand salute to Jillian for her inspiring deeds. She has proved that if anyone has the zeal to achieve something in life, no circumstances can ever stop him or her.

> Prinka Kumari Jha. Picnic Garden

I believe there's always a reason for everything and hard times are the greatest test for our resolve. Opportunities come knocking, but they come with a whisper, a slight whis-

**Eugene Arnold Jaraine** 

Jillian's inspirational life story should be included in textbooks as a lesson for children.

M.K. Roy

God bless the universe with many more souls like you to uplift the downtrodden.

Biswakesh Mishra

What appealed to me about Jillian's story is that she is not ashamed to tell the world how she grew up in abject poverty. .

Crystal

Jillian Haslam's indomitable spirit and resolution make her story incredible. She is a ray of hope for millions of others in a similar situation.

> Malay Kumar Bhaduri, Salt Lake

It is an unforgettable story. Your will power will surely inspire many.

Tridib Dutta

Your life is a perfect illustration of a silent and sincere struggle to overcome a wretched childhood.

Jiban Kumar Roy

Long live Jillian and her mission.

Basu Dev Basu

 Jillian is a credit to herself. her parents and a living testament to Calcutta's kind-hearted and generous citizens.

Rosalind Thorpe

I'm overwhelmed and astounded by Jillian's personality. Parnika Chatterjee

A wonder woman! Nigella Kennedy

I was moved by your story. R.K. Pilania

Jillian Haslam's story is really an inspiration to the young.

Kriti Jaiswal

With tears in my eyes, I read about Jillian Haslam.

Ruby Bhagat

I spent my teen years (1952-60) in Calcutta and Darjeeling. Even though you were in Calcutta in the 70s, I can almost visualise how and where you lived. That part of your life made you what you are today. The city hasn't changed for the better but retains its charm.

Vikrom Suebsaeng

Letters on reports appearing in Metro may be sent to: The Telegraph (Metro) 6, Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta - 700 001 E-mail: ttmetro@abpmail.com

## Her success story is inspiring. concern for our poor, and have fight back to make a living. I done nothing about it. Our City am truly moved by the astonof Joy lives in poverty, more of ishing display of tenacity and I cried in pain and then